

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 1990

DEPARTMENT PASS NSC FOR GENERAL SCOWCROFT

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MCAP, PFOR, TH, US

SUBJ: TURNOVER OF INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM TO ROYAL
THAI GOVERNMENT

SUMMARY: IN JUNE 1973 A PLAN FOR THE TURNOVER OF THE
INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM (ICS) IN CONNECTION WITH
REDEPLOYMENT OF US FORCES FROM THAILAND WAS SUBMITTED TO
WASHINGTON FOR APPROVAL. WE ARE AWARE OF THAI INTEREST
IN THE ICS, BUT IN THE ABSENCE OF WASHINGTON APPROVAL OF
THE TURNOVER CONCEPT, WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO DISCUSS IT
WITH THEM. IN THE MEANTIME, THE THAI HAVE TAKEN STEPS
TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN INDEPENDENT MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS
SYSTEM. IF TURNOVER CONCEPT IN PROPOSED PLAN IS FEASIBLE,
RECOMMEND WE BE AUTHORIZED TO DISCUSS IT WITH THE THAI AS
SOON AS POSSIBLE TO AVOID COSTLY DUPLICATION. END SUMMARY.

1. THE EXTENSIVE AND COMPLEX MILITARY LONG HAUL
COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM IN THAILAND HAS BEEN RECOMMENDED
FOR TURNOVER TO THE THAI SINCE JUNE 1973. THE JUNE
1973 PLAN ADVOCATED TURNOVER OF SELECTED PORTIONS OF THE
ICS TO THE THAI MILITARY. IT CALLS FOR A TIME PHASED,
LOCAL NATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM TO SUPPORT THE TURNOVER.
INDEPENDENT RTARF MANNING OF THE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM
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WOULD NOT TAKE PLACE, HOWEVER, WHILE THE SYSTEM IS

UTILIZED PRIMARILY BY US FORCES.

2. THE PLAN RECOMMENDED THAT AS US REQUIREMENTS IN THE ICS IN THAILAND DECREASE, PORTIONS WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT JUSTIFIED RTARF REQUIREMENTS. THE RESIDUAL MILITARY ICS WILL BE AN INTEGRATED US-RTARF SYSTEM AND WILL BE OPERATED AND MAINTAINED JOINTLY BY US AND RTARF PERSONNEL. AS US REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SYSTEM DECREASE, O&M WILL BE PROGRESSIVELY TURNED OVER TO THE RTARF.

3. ALTHOUGH THE PLAN WAS SUBMITTED OVER EIGHTEEN MONTHS AGO, THERE HAS NOT YET BEEN ANY DECISION WHICH WOULD ENABLE US TO BEGIN TO DISCUSS THE PLAN WITH THE THAI. IN THE MEANTIME, WE HAVE EVIDENCE THAT THE RTARF HAS BEGUN TO PLAN FOR ITS OWN MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM WHICH WOULD DUPLICATE MANY FACETS OF THE EXISTING ICS SYSTEM. IF THE TURNOVER CONCEPT AS PROPOSED IS FEASIBLE, WE OUGHT TO BEGIN TALKING TO THE THAI ABOUT THE PLAN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THE MORE WE DELAY, THE FARTHER DOWN THE ROAD THE THAI WILL BE WITH THEIR OWN PLAN AND ASSOCIATED EXPENDITURES AND THE LESS ATTRACTIVE THE BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSED TURNOVER WILL BE. ALSO, WE RISK MISSING A MAJOR OPPORTUNITY TO OFFSET DECLINING MAP.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: PLEASE ADVISE EMBASSY OF STATUS OF JUNE 1973 PLAN PROPOSING TURNOVER OF ICS SYSTEM TO THE THAI. WE RECOMMEND THE TURNOVER CONCEPT BE APPROVED AND DISCUSSION OPENED WITH THE THAI AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE TIME.
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